

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 23, 2001

LB 657

After we have reduced the allocation of MRF to Lincoln and Omaha it redistributes the amount that would have otherwise gone to Lincoln and Omaha, and that's about \$1.2 million, and sends that out to municipalities across the state. And you, if you look at the sheet that says "Revised", you can see the communities that would receive the money, the extra funding and the amount. Now, how does that fit within the broad policy framework that I think we need to consider this bill? As the bill stands, it benefits only two municipalities and it would, we're told, only be used to fund two projects, one in each one of the communities, fund in part. The monies that would be distributed to municipalities across the state obviously has a very broad impact, it touches all of us. It would go for many different projects across the state of Nebraska. Within a policy framework it actually addresses what I think is a more fundamental principle and that is that we use state resources in a fashion that meets or addresses statewide needs. And I have no doubt that there are municipalities across the state that will not find the opportunity or a need to use the extra funding that we would provide to them. We are not meeting what I would characterize as explicitly other policy objectives that we should be concerned about with these kinds of proposals, and I wish to acknowledge that. This amendment does not meet the "but for" test. Would anything happen without state resources? Clearly doesn't do that because we don't know what other municipalities are going to do, but the underlying bill doesn't do that either. In fact, it is very clear that Lincoln and Omaha simply don't need the money at all. So if at the very worst we're doing by this amendment is distributing money to other municipalities that don't need it, I would suggest that we're not doing anything worse. On the issue of whether something will happen without state resources or not,...

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: One minute.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: ...it is already quite clear that the Omaha project will go forward without state resources. Gallup has signed on the dotted line. I'm assuming they did not make that without commitments from the city of Omaha. There is no "but for" test to be met for funding for the city of Omaha. I'm not aware that there is a "but for" test for the city of Lincoln,